

ORANGE COUNTY OLDER ADULT POPULATION COLLECTIVE

HEALTH EQUITY PLAN

The Equity in OC (EiOC) Initiative was a limited-term project funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) under the National Initiative to Address COVID-19 Health Disparities Among Populations at High-Risk and Underserved, Including Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations and Rural Communities (CDC-RFA-OT21-2103). The initiative concluded in May 2024. This document and any associated EiOC branding were developed as part of that grant-funded effort.



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INTRODUCTION

The Orange County Health Care Agency (HCA) Office of Population Health and Equity (OPHE) received nearly \$23 million in grant funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national initiative to address COVID-19 health disparities among populations at high-risk and underserved, including racial and ethnic minority populations and rural communities (CDC-RFA-OT21-2103).

The long-term strategies of this two-year **Equity in OC Initiative** will:

- Expand existing and/or develop new mitigation and prevention resources.
- Increase or improve data collection, reporting, and infrastructure.
- Build, leverage, and expand the capacity and infrastructure of local health departments.
- Mobilize partners and collaborators to advance health equity and address social determinants of health.

As a part of EiOC, seven Population Health Equity Collectives were created:

- Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community
- Black or African American community
- Individuals with disabilities
- Latino, Hispanic, Chicano, or Latin American community
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) community
- Older adult community
- South Asian, Middle Eastern, North African (SAMENA)

The overarching goals of these Collectives are to:

- Address health inequities and improve social determinants of health through collaboration, partnership, and inclusion of lived experiences and authentic voices.
- Overcome inequitable access to opportunities, resources, and support services for targeted and prioritized populations in Orange County.
- Build and support cohesive and sustainable Collectives in Orange County, and address systemic health inequities facing prioritized impacted communities.
- Provide venues for community voice in identifying and determining solutions, and priorities in addressing health inequities of the Collective.

PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

The purpose of the Health Equity Plan (HEP) is to support the creation of practical, meaningful, and sustainable improvements in the health and well-being of the Older Adult Community in Orange County. The HEP for each community will guide the vision, including unique strategies and calls-to-action that will help to propel the community toward health equity.

PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY

For the [Older Adult community in Orange County](#), we, the members of this collective are operating under the common shared understanding of what will lead to health equity in our community.

Key areas:

- Food Security and Nutrition
- Elder Abuse Prevention
- Housing
- Healthcare

COLLECTIVE MEMBERSHIP

The Collective, Orange County Aging Services Collaborative (OCASC), has a total of **40+** member organizations. In addition, **2** community members are also engaged in OCASC's work.

Type of Partner Organizations	Name(s) of Partner Organizations
Academic Institutions	CSU Fullerton, UC Irvine, Saddleback Emeritus Institute
Council, Community Group, Coalition	California Collaborative for Long Term Services and Supports, OC Veterans & Military Families, California Senior Legislature, Multi-Ethnic Collaborative of Community Agencies (MECCA)
Faith-Based Organization	Second Baptist Church
Federal Agency (other than CDC)	Veterans Affairs (VA) Long Beach
Healthcare Providers	CalOptima Health, SCAN Health Plan, St. Joseph, Providence, Caregiver Resource Center OC, AltaMed, Hoag, UCI MIND
Health-Related Organizations	Radiant Health Centers, Community Health Initiative OC
Individual Community Members	Fumi Liang, Vivian De Leon
Local Government Agencies	OC Office on Aging, OC Social Services Agency – Adult Protective Services
Local Health Department	Orange County Health Care Agency
Mental or Behavioral Health Organization	BeWell OC, Older Adult Behavioral Health Advisory Council
Nongovernmental Organizations	211OC, Abrazar, AgeWell, Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Family Center, Alzheimer's Orange County, Braille Institute, Community Health Initiative OC, Community Legal Aid SoCal, Community Action Partnership OC, Council on Aging – Southern California, Dayle McIntosh Center, Easterseals Southern California, The LGBTQ Center OC, OC Community Foundation, Hoag Center for Research & Education, Hope Community Services, Jamboree Housing, Meals on Wheels OC, OMID Multicultural Institute for Development, Peer Voices, Sahaas For Cause, Radiant Futures

Type of Partner Organizations	Name(s) of Partner Organizations
Other	Cities of: Anaheim, Buena Park, Brea, Costa Mesa, Fountain Valley, Fullerton, Garden Grove, Irvine, Laguna Woods, Mission Viejo, Orange, Santa Ana, Seal Beach, Stanton, Tustin, Yorba Linda

Communities Served: Older Adults, Black/African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Latinx/Latine, Disabilities, LGBTQ+, Middle Eastern, Veteran, etc.

Membership Requirements and Bylaws

- Full members of the OCASC will be non-profit entities with at least one program that “targets” a senior population. These members will pay \$550 to participate in the Collaborative.
- Governmental entities that serve seniors will be invited to be “Advisory Members” of the OCASC (thereby alleviating issues for those entities with supporting policy statements etc). Governmental members will have a voice, but not a vote, in the Collaborative.
- Individual Community Members will be self-nominated or nominated by a member organization. Two Individuals will serve two-year terms with no more than two consecutive terms. Individuals will be interviewed by OCASC staff and voted in by current members. A two-thirds majority is required for membership approval.

PROCESS AND DATA

In 2009, Alzheimer’s Orange County asked several key community partners to form the OCASC. The group was formed as a forum for agencies (governmental and nonprofit) that had a focus on seniors to meet, exchange ideas and to create joint projects to benefit the senior population in Orange County.

In 2016, the Orange County Strategic Plan for Aging (OCSPA) was established under OCASC with the goal of creating a Strategic Plan for the County. The organization is composed of committees that worked on key areas that were found to improve the lives of older adults. Since its inception, OCSPA has developed and implemented goals in each strategic area under annual countywide strategic plans.

In 2023, OCASC and OCSPA combined efforts under the OCASC umbrella and now operate as a single entity. OCASC will continue to prepare and publish the annual data report, focusing on different strategic areas each year such as Food Security & Nutrition, Elder Abuse Prevention, Housing, and Healthcare. Other areas of focus will be adopted in coming years such as transportation, social isolation and technology.

Committee objectives include: hosting annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) event, refresh Friendly Visitor Toolkit in light of changes created by the pandemic, increase awareness about senior food programs, increase food security for Orange County’s older adults age 60+ by enrolling 2,000 new participants in CalFresh over a course of 18 months, increase awareness and utilization of preventative services for older adults, and promote the Annual Wellness Visit Toolkit with providers.

Three of the key areas, Food Security & Nutrition, Healthcare, and Housing, align with the Social Determinants of Health discussed by Equity in OC Partnership. The committees for each key area are creating attainable goals to achieve within 18 months, beginning year two of the Equity in OC Partnership. The Report on Aging in Orange County 2023 stated 36% of older adults live alone in Orange County.

LGBTQ+ older adults are twice as likely to live alone and 60% say they feel isolated. Social Isolation is one of the top factors putting older and dependent adults at risk of abuse.

The Report on Aging in Orange County 2023, explains that current Orange County data from the CalFresh dashboard indicates that their older adult enrollment grew in the last 2 years by nearly 42% from June 2021 (54,404 older adults) to January 2023 (77,367 older adults). Additionally, Feeding America estimated the annual food budget shortfall in Orange County was \$180 Million in 2020, before the pandemic.

In regards to healthcare, the Report on Aging in Orange County 2023, poor physical or mental health increases the risk for social isolation. Chronic conditions, physical limitations, or limited mobility also increase risk, as do impaired senses, especially hearing loss. Those with depression are at greater risk than those without. Cognitive impairment increases risk as well. Inversely, social isolation has been associated with an increased risk of developing dementia.

The Black/African American Collective participated in the Report on Aging in Orange County 2023 report. They provided residential data on their Black participants; of their 451 respondents, more than half live in a single-family residence (53%) and about 35% live in condos, townhomes, or apartment complexes.

According to the Report on Aging in Orange County 2023, between 2019 and 2022, Orange County saw a decrease of 17% in overall homelessness, though the number of unsheltered adults with physical disabilities, mental health challenges, or substance abuse issues increased during that time period. One participating agency (not mentioned in the Report on Aging in Orange County 2023) that tracks homelessness reported that between 2021- 2022, of their 41,534 clients, the majority were male (62%), not Veterans (83%), and Caucasian/White (74%), with 41% categorized as chronically homeless and 33% as homeless for the first time. Another agency (not mentioned in the Report on Aging in Orange County 2023) reported that their clients believe “more affordable housing” and “housing insecurity/ homelessness” are key areas in need of improvement in their community. This is important because housing insecurity is more than homelessness; it includes numerous factors associated with home ownership and aging in place.

“... OCASC has a diplomatic process, a great structure in place, and does well in communicating with the members. For example, if there are events or advocacy efforts happening locally or at the state level, such information is shared in meetings, via email and monthly newsletters. Also, during the OCASC general meetings and committee meetings, members are educated on what is happening in the Collaborative and in the committees. OCASC provides a welcoming environment and members’ voices are heard.”

—MIEKA BLEDSOE, LCSW HUMAN OPTIONS

STRATEGIC HEALTH EQUITY ACTION AREAS

1 Policy and Systems Changes

Strategies to Impact Policy and Systems	Objective	Measurable Outcome	Timeline
"Mastering the Master Plan" Event	Update the county on the implementation of the CA Master Plan for Aging to increase community engagement in the planning process. Allow community members to bring older adult issues to elected officials.	Have at least 40% of attendees indicate in the post event survey their willingness to participate in the Older Adults Needs Assessment conducted by Advance OC. Receive at least 10 questions in advance and at least 5 questions during the event for elected officials/speakers.	Planning: January 2023 – November 2023 Host the event November 3, 2023
Create Advocacy Agenda	Collective identifies key state and local policies to pursue in the upcoming year.	Collective conducts process by which policy agenda is created with diverse voices.	September 2023 – May 2024
Senior Rally Day 2024	Educate elected officials/staff on older adults needs and advocate for bills upon California Long-Term Supports Services (CLTSS) recommendation.	Elected officials will have increased knowledge of bills that OCASC and CLTSS support.	Winter 2024: Participate in CLTSS Senior Rally Day preparation. Spring 2024: Senior Rally Day
Ongoing Education for Elected Officials	Educate elected officials on the Report on Aging in OC 2023. Educate and/or ask for support on Legislative Bills related to older adult issues, i.e., AB 385 (Ta) – Alzheimer’s Disease: Public Awareness Campaign.	Strengthen collaboration between OCASC and Elected Officials, i.e., hosting senior resource fairs, sponsoring and/or support Legislative Bills.	Ongoing – complete by May 2024

“Mastering the Master Plan” is a California Master Plan for Aging update. It will feature leadership from the California Department of Aging, the Orange County Office on Aging, Advance OC, and the OC Aging Services Collaborative. This virtual event is open to all Orange County residents, non-profits, government agencies, etc., which provides an opportunity to impact how Orange County experiences aging. This event allows individuals with lived experiences to participate and be a part of the decision-making process. There will be a Townhall portion where attendees are able to ask questions and/or give feedback to local Elected Officials. Questions and feedback will be submitted before the event via a survey and during the event via the chat/question & answer tool. This event will also encourage Orange County residents to participate in the Older Adults Needs Assessment conducted by Advance OC.

“Educating Elected Officials and their staff along with strengthening collaboration sheds light on older adult issues in Orange County. Learning about the work that the Collaborative is doing such as the Report on Aging in Orange County, webinars, etc., helps support Legislative Bills and participation in events such as Senior Rally Day, Mastering the Master Plan, etc. For example, there is a history of a strong relationship between Senator Umberg and Assemblymember Quirk-Silva’s office. Every year they participate in Senior Rally Day and have participated in Mastering the Master Plan. Through the work that the Collaborative

has achieved, Assemblymember Ta is working closely with some OCASC members on AB 385 – Alzheimer’s Disease: Public Awareness Campaign. Continuing to strengthen collaboration and establishing relationships with newly Elected Officials brings awareness to the work that OCASC is doing to better serve Orange County’s older adults and their families.

2 Meaningful Partnerships, Power Building, and Power Sharing

OCASC does not have any tribal organizations participating in the Collaborative. OCASC staff will continue to reach out to tribal organizations and invite them to collaborate. OCASC staff will also continue to outreach to housing organizations in order to have more voices at the table in the housing committee. Outreach is done via email, phone calls, and networking at events such as CHILA, community events, and resource/ health fairs.

OCASC is currently involved in HCA’s Equity in OC Partnership. OCASC received a grant for the Older Adult Population Collective.

OCHCA is also a collaborative member of OCASC and has several representatives participating in the Food Security & Nutrition and Healthcare committees.

OCASC has reached out to several organizations that participate in the Equity in OC Partnership and the Population Health Collectives. There are currently member organizations that also partake in the Black/African American Population Collective, Asian American/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Population Collective, and the LGBTQ+ Population Collective. OCASC is interested in partnering and collaborating with other Population Health Collectives.

Strategies to Build Partnerships and Power	Objective	Measurable Outcome	Timeline
Outreach to Non-Member Organizations	Increase collaborative membership by at least 5 organizations.	Increased participation of diverse/ new voices on OCASC Committees. New members will attend a minimum of six meetings per year.	Minimum 5 organization increase by June 2024

Powersharing is done by checking in with OCASC members and each committee at the end of the year, via a survey and during general and/or committee meetings. New strategies of powersharing include: checking in with new members quarterly; including two community members that identify as older adults with lived experiences.

The sliding scale will allow organizations that do not normally have the financial means to join OCASC to participate in the committees and network OCASC offers. This along with general outreach to organizations that are not part of the Collaborative will allow OCASC to hear diverse perspectives that may not be known by the current membership. As mentioned above, OCASC plans on outreaching to tribal organizations to bring in voices that are not yet heard. OCASC will also be outreaching to more Asian/Asian-American organizations, Middle Eastern organizations, South Asian organizations, etc.

As more members join, it will stabilize OCASC committees by each gaining more members to work on their goals.

3 Infrastructure, Data, and Other Capacities

OCASC has witnessed a loss of participation in some of the committees, post COVID-19, due to organizations not having bandwidth or organizational restructure. OCASC is working to create strategies to restructure the Collaborative and reinvigorate active participation. An Ad Hoc Restructure committee was created to brainstorm and identify areas of duplicated efforts to streamline the Collaborative.

As the first phase of the restructure comes to an end, OCASC committees are currently being revamped with new goals to establish their actionable work for the next 18-month period. At the end of the 18-month period, committees will assess whether they failed to meet their goals, made significant progress towards their goals, or accomplished their goals.

To make sure Orange County agencies are reaching the rapidly growing older adult population, an expansion on the Report on Aging in Orange County Data report is being created. In 2024, OCASC plans to create and conduct a survey an estimated 3,000 seniors in the County (languages have not been determined yet), to include at-risk, underserved, and low-income Orange County seniors to identify gaps in service delivery, unmet service delivery needs and imbalances in service delivery. Rather than create another Data report from existing data, building on the three reports released by OCASC in the past four years, OCASC suggests creating their own data set via the aforementioned survey.

It has been clear for many years that data on seniors is not readily available in a format or in sufficient numbers to create a true picture of the state of senior services, senior needs, or any other aspect of information on the senior population in the county. A directed survey of the senior population will provide insight into which programs and services would benefit from enhancement in coming years as the population of seniors in the county escalates. Existing data sets are often skewed by the demographics surveyed, the methodology of surveys or instruments, and many other socio-economic factors.

Continuation of the Collaborative efforts OCASC is doing to share and create information, data, and resources in order to serve the older adult population, and expanding organizational engagement, leads to sustainability of the Collaborative.

Strategies to Strengthen Infrastructure, Data or Other Capacities	Objective	Measurable Outcome	Timeline
Restructure the Collaborative	<p>Identify areas of duplicated efforts and streamline Committee structure.</p> <p>Provide members an opportunity to decide which focus areas they want to work towards.</p>	<p>Each of the 4 committees will identify 2-3 working goals for the next 18-month period.</p> <p>All goals will be completed at the end of the 18-months.</p>	<p>Restructure: Complete by June 2023</p> <p>Goal Creation: Complete by end of September 2023</p> <p>Committee Implementation: Through December 2024</p>
OCASC Survey 2024	<p>Conduct a survey to identify gaps in service delivery, unmet service delivery needs, and imbalances in service delivery.</p>	<p>Receive data from an estimated 3,000 individuals in the community quota calculation.</p> <p>Identify the unmet needs of underrepresented populations within Orange County.</p>	<p>Survey Participants: Fall 2024</p> <p>Complete: May 2024</p>